

REMARKS

The above amendments and the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated March 31, 2008. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1, 3-8 and 10-11 are under consideration in this application. Claims 2 and 9 are being cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 3, 5-6 and 8 are being amended to correct formal errors and to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject invention. All the amendments to the claims are supported by the specification. Applicants hereby submit that no new matter is being introduced into the application through the submission of this response.

Formality Rejection

Claims 1-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, as not being enabled by the specification. The claims are being amended as required by the Examiner. As such, the withdrawal of the outstanding informality rejection is in order, and is therefore respectfully solicited.

Prior Art Rejection

Claims 1 and 3-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Ohba et al. (US 6,605,344) and Rickert, Jr. (US 4,163,702), respectively. Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 (a) as being unpatentable over Ohba '344 in view of Rickert '702. These rejections have been carefully considered, but are most respectfully traversed, as more fully discussed below.

The film of the present invention, as now recited in claim 1, comprises at least a multivalent metal salt of a polycarboxylate-based polymer (A), and a multivalent metal in an amount which is in a range of 1 to 5 chemical equivalents relative to all the carboxyl groups contained in the polycarboxylate-based. polymer (A) ([0041] of the corresponding US Pub. No. 20070134507; claim 2). A density of the film is in a range of 1.80 to 2.89 g/cm³ ([0043]).

A thickness of the film is in a range of 0.001 μm to 1 mm ([0059]). A surface ratio α [the peak surface $S_1(3700 \text{ to } 2500 \text{ cm}^{-1})$]/a peak surface $S_2(1800 \text{ to } 1500 \text{ cm}^{-1})$] of an infrared absorption spectrum of the film is not larger than 2.5. A peak ratio β [the peak $A_1(1560 \text{ cm}^{-1})$]/the peak $A_2(1700 \text{ cm}^{-1})$] of the infrared absorption spectrum is not smaller than 1.2.

The invention is also directed to a method of manufacturing the film of claim 1.

The cited references and their combination do not teach or suggest such a film as in the present invention or any of the “unexpected results” achieved only via the present invention, such as the multivalent metal compound being present in an amount in a range of 1 to 5 chemical equivalents relative to all the carboxyl groups contained in the polycarboxylate-based polymer. Attached hereto is a draft of a Declaration under 37 C.F.R. §1.132 attesting to the above in detail for the Examiner’s initial consideration. Applicants are in the process of finalizing and executing the Declaration. A signed copy of the Declaration under 37 C.F.R. §1.132 will be filed as soon as it becomes available from the Applicants.

In addition, Applicants are in the process of conducting experiments to collect data that illustrates the differences between the invention and the cited prior art. The data will demonstrate that the invention achieves “unexpected results” which can be achieved only via the present invention, but not via the prior art shown in the cited references. That data will be submitted via a supplemental Declaration once it becomes available.

Applicants contend that the cited references and their combinations fail to teach or suggest each and every feature of the present invention as recited in at least independent claims 1 and 8. As such, the present invention as now claimed is distinguishable and thereby allowable over the rejections raised in the Office Action. The withdrawal of the outstanding prior art rejections is in order, and is respectfully solicited.

Conclusion

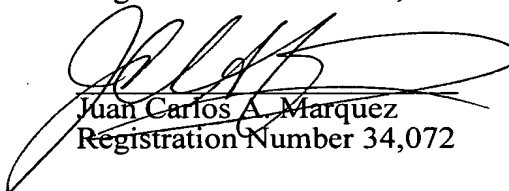
In view of all the above, Applicants respectfully submit that certain clear and distinct differences as discussed exist between the present invention as now claimed and the prior art references upon which the rejections in the Office Action rely. These differences are more than sufficient that the present invention as now claimed would not have been anticipated nor rendered obvious given the prior art. Rather, the present invention as a whole is distinguishable, and thereby allowable over the prior art.

Favorable reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the

prosecution and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the address and telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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